

**IRONWOOD FOREST NATIONAL MONUMENT (IFNM)
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RMP) AND
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)
PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY**

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, September 22, 2004

MEETING LOCATION: Parks and Recreation Building
Tucson, Arizona

PURPOSE: **Public Informational Meeting**
Public Health and Safety
Interpretive and Educational Opportunities

Introduction

Larry Shults, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Planning Team Leader, opened the meeting with a welcome. All attendees made self-introductions. Approximately 25 people attended the meeting, including 7 BLM representatives and 15 citizens. Groups represented included the Tucson Audubon Society, Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists, Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Association, Arizona State Association of Off-Highway Riders, Tucson Rough Riders, among other organizations and other private citizens.

Public Health and Safety Presentation

Kevin Andrews and Wes Davis, BLM Rangers for the IFNM, spoke about public health and safety in the IFNM. It was stated that visitors to the IFNM should be prepared during recreational outings and visits by adhering to the following guidelines:

- Bring the appropriate equipment
- Bring at least one gallon of water per person
- Bring a cell phone
- Tell someone where you are going
- Wear appropriate clothing
- Bring a first aid kit
- Watch out for wildlife, including snakes, bees, Gila monsters, etc. – respect their habitats
- Avoid undocumented alien (UDA) and smuggling traffic
- Do not go unaccompanied

Kevin and Wes further discussed undocumented immigration by saying that generally, UDA are trying to pass through the desert and usually mean no harm. Smugglers on the other hand, tend to exhibit more dangerous behavior. They often drive very fast and usually drive at night with no headlights on to avoid detection. They often are carrying weapons and the vehicles in which they are carrying UDAs generally are overloaded with too many people. Abandoned vehicles can be staging vehicles for smugglers, so visitors should not approach them.

Trash and abandoned items are also an issue in the IFNM. Both commercial waste and household waste have been found including vegetation and landscaping materials, used oil, debris discarded by UDAs, and urban trash. This waste sometimes includes biohazardous, infectious, and flammable materials. Generally, BLM cleanup crews, park staff, or volunteers handle cleanup. Approximately 300 cubic yards of trash was collected during 2003.

Shooting and hunting is legal on Federal land, which includes the IFNM. A permit is required for these activities on State Trust Land. There are no formally designated shooting locations on the IFNM, but there are some traditional or popular places. The rangers emphasized that shooters should determine that there is a backstop when they are target shooting to avoid shooting across roads and endangering others. Recreational shooters often leave shooting debris and the rangers suggested that shooters take targets with them so that they do not shoot at signs, cacti (or other vegetation), or household appliances. Glass debris from televisions and computer monitors cannot be picked up, and it contains lots of lead.

Question: How is recreational shooting managed?

Answer: Managing recreational shooting is difficult since the area is large and the rangers can cover only so much of the area at any one time. BLM tries to engage as many agencies and volunteers as possible in public education regarding recreational shooting safety. BLM has participated in the National Rifle Association (NRA) meetings to examine recreational shooting.

Question: Why is illegal immigration seasonal?

Answer: In the summer, the high temperatures discourage people from attempting to cross the desert. Peak time for undocumented immigrant traffic is the fall and mid January. Many UDAs return home to Mexico for the Christmas holiday season and return to the U.S. for work in January.

Question/Suggestion: It's a good idea to go out into remote areas with more than one vehicle, so that if one breaks down, the other can take people to safety.

Question: Is there a place where UDA traffic occurs less often?

Answer: UDAs are not generally found near around Ragged Top, they tend to funnel around the Silver Bell Mountains.

Question: Who has jurisdiction when there is a problem?

Answer: In the event of a problem involving immediate personal injury, 911 should be called. This is a County function. The County is also the primary contact for cases of violent crime and crimes against property. Federal crime is under the jurisdiction of BLM.

Recreation/Interpretive Education (Bob Hernbrode, Wildlife Biologist)

Bob explained that there are three types of education:

- Formal education – programs guided by State of Arizona standards. They are activity oriented, curriculum supplementing, balanced, and correct.
- Informal education – educational materials presented to a voluntary audience.

- Experiential education – takes place in a work-oriented environment (e.g., trail construction and maintenance)

Bob explained that there are several models for the educational programs, including one at Aquila Vista. He suggested that a program for classrooms or informal recreational groups could be developed specifically for the IFNM..

Question/Suggestion: It was suggested that the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan describes means for funding education and it may be helpful to contact the organization for more information..

Question/Suggestion: The representative from the Tucson Audubon Society stated that their facility is located on several acres of land and they have developed an educational program about ironwood trees and associated habitat.

Question: Is there funding for educational programs?

Answer: There is no specific budget line item, but educational programs are factored into the budget of each BLM program.